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ALLIANCE SAYS UNITY, MINORITY RIGHTS KEY TESTS OF FEDERAL PROPOSALS

MONTREAL SEPTEMBER 24 — Alliance Quebec President Robert Keaton called the federal government proposals for constitutional change a fundamental document requiring serious consideration by all Canadians.

Keaton stated that Alliance Quebec would undertake an in-depth study of the proposals and will take the time necessary to weigh the proposals carefully.

"It is our intention to be active and constructive participants in the consultations which will be taking place over the next several months," Keaton said.

"The central concerns of English-speaking Quebecers remain Canadian unity and the protection of minorities. This is a critical period in the country's history. National unity cannot be achieved without ensuring minority rights," he said.

"We see no reason why these two ideals, Canadian unity and respect for minority rights should be irreconcilable. Indeed we remain firmly convinced that the protection of minorities is an essential cornerstone of a strong cohesive Canada."

Mr. Keaton said Alliance Quebec would be giving serious consideration to every aspect of the federal proposal, with a view to ensuring that the rights of English-speaking Quebecers will not be diminished.

"Our goal is that, at the end of the day, constitutional reform will ensure that any English-speaking and any French-speaking Canadian can feel at home anywhere in Canada and that the minority linguistic communities can expect to grow and thrive."

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